

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY AYALDE'S REMARKS ON
CITIZEN SECURITY AT THE
U.S.-BAHAMAS INTERAGENCY DIALOGUE
DECEMBER 17, 2012, POLICE CONFERENCE CENTER,
NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS

(Prepared on December 16, 2012)

- The Right Honorable Perry G. Christie, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas
- The Honorable Philip E. Davis, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works and Urban Development
- The Honorable Dr. Bernard J. Nottage, Minister of National Security
- The Honorable Frederick Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
- Honorable Cabinet Ministers
- Senior Government Officials
- Ladies and Gentlemen

- It is an honor for me to be here today in the capital of this beautiful country. I am pleased to be leading the United States government interagency delegation, which Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton proposed to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, the Right Honorable Perry Christie.
- The Secretary charged this delegation of U.S. government officials to meet with you, our Bahamian counterparts, to gain a better understanding of the challenges The Bahamas is facing in the area of citizen security, and to seek ways to work together to confront these priority challenges.
- Our meeting today underscores the close ties between our two nations and the commitment to build upon our strong and historic foundations. The United States and The Bahamas enjoy a strong bilateral relationship built on shared interest in security, strengthening democracy, and promoting trade and cultural exchanges.

- The United States historically has had close economic, commercial, and cultural relations with The Bahamas. Just look at the number of Bahamian college students in the United States, and the more than 110 U.S.-related businesses in The Bahamas.
- Even as American tourists relax and enjoy the magnificent natural and cultural heritage of the Bahamas, their dollars constitute a critical part of the Bahamian economy here on New Providence as well as on Grand Bahama and the Family Islands. The nearly 5 million U.S. tourists who visit each year are an essential part of our interwoven story.
- We have a shared interest in ensuring the safety of visitors and citizens alike in The Bahamas and we recognize the importance of combating crime and illegal activities that threaten citizens of both our countries. We know the sinister and subversive actors who reject the rule of law also flout national borders, so we must join in common purpose and methods.
- The U.S. government partners with Bahamian law enforcement in Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos to deter, interdict, and capture narcotics traffickers.

This tripartite security agreement thwarts the flow of illegal drugs transiting The Bahamas, dismantles drug trafficking organizations, and strengthens the sharing of information among law enforcement entities.

- Its achievements and example are a model for the region. This longtime partnership is not standing still, but continues to grow and evolve. We look forward to discussing the evolution of this and other partnership areas in the coming sessions.
- Through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, the United States provides extensive training to enhance the criminal investigative capacity of Bahamian law enforcement agencies such as the Royal Bahamas Police force, including training for community-based policing, combat lifesaving, forensics professionalization, anti-gang training, and cyber investigations and information sharing, among others.
- As the means and methods of criminals continue to change, law enforcement means and methods also need to adapt to meet the challenges. Law enforcement personnel must be well-equipped and well- informed.

- Increased funding and a more expansive interpretation of the range of issues involved in citizen security have allowed our partnership to include institutions like Her Majesty's Prison and the Bahamas National Drug Council, which is doing important work on preventing crime and reducing the demand for drugs.
- Our goal during this meeting is to encourage a dialogue on citizen security and bilateral law enforcement priorities to ensure that we understand one another as we carry out our important work.
- In addition, this meeting presents an opportunity to exchange not only information, but also perspectives and priorities, and to identify how we can more effectively coordinate our efforts to plan for the weeks and months ahead.
- I look forward to the work we will accomplish together today. And I am confident that we will walk away with an enhanced joint strategy that will contribute to safer, more peaceful, and more prosperous Bahamian communities.

- I would like to leave you with a thought that a senior officer of the Royal Bahamas Police Force shared with the Embassy after he returned from a two-week Department of State exchange that brought law enforcement representatives from CBSI countries together to examine community police initiatives in the United States. I think that this sums up our shared purpose here today. He said, "...there is power in the community and the problems in my nation are shared by my neighbors and in the U.S. We can and should look to each other for ways to fix them."
- I would like to end by first thanking our Bahamian counterparts for their gracious and warm welcome. And on behalf Secretary Clinton and President Obama, I would like to thank the government and the people of The Bahamas for being a stalwart friend and a trusted neighbor.